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# Message Text

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53
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 AID-20

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R 062223Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8816
INFO USCINCSO
AMCONSUL CALI UNN
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN UNN

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E O 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CO

SUBJ: LIBERALS OPEN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. LIBERAL PARTY CANDIDATE ALFONSOLOPEZ MICHELSEN AND PARTY CHIEF JULIO CESAR TURBAY AYALA PRESIDED AT AN IMPRESSIVELY LARGE (ESTIMATED 100,000) OUTDOOR RALLY, OPENING THE 73-74 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. LOPEZ IS PRESENTLY THE ONLY MAJOR PARTY "OFFICIAL CANDIDATE" IN THE FIELD. (THE CONSERVATIVES ARE EXPECTED TO NOMINATE ALVARO GOMEZ HURTADO AT THEIR SEPT CONVENTION AND CONSIDERABLE DOUBT EXISTS WITHIN ANAPO WHETHER THE ELDERLY ROJAS PINILLA OR HIS DAUGHTER MARIA EUGENIA WILL BE THE CANDIDATE.)

2. LOPEZ IN OPENING HIS DRIVE FOR THE APRIL 74 ELECTIONS, THE FIRST FREELY PARTISAN CONTEST FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN OVER TWO DECADES SPOKE WITH NOTABLE CAUTION. HE PLEDGED HIS PARTY TO AVOID EXCESSES OF CONCEPT OR LANGUAGE THAT COULD INTRODUCE VIOLENCE INTO THE COLOMBIAN POLIT ATMOSPHERE, WHICH IS NOW RELATIVELY
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FREE OF FACTIONAL TENSIONS.

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3. WHILE ESCHEWING EXTREME PARTISANSHIP, LOPEZ MADE CLEAR THAT HE WAS OFFERING A DISTINCT CHOICE TO THE VOTERS. HE STATED THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO ENTER INTO ANY COALITIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS BUT HOPED INSTEAD TO GATHER TO HIS PROGRAMS SUPPORT FROM ALL SECTORS.

4. LOPEZ SAID THAT THE LIBERALS WOULD OFFER DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS TO THE NATION'S PROBLEMS AND THAT HIS ELECTION WOULD MEAN A DEFINITE SHIFT TO THE LEFT FOR COLOMBIA. HE CHARACTERIZED THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AS TENDING TO AUTOCRACY AND AS FAVORING A DEVELOPMENT POLICY THAT IS ADVERSE TO AGRARIAN AND URBAN REFORM. HE CLAIMED THAT THE CONSERVATIVES PLACED A HIGHER PREMIUM ON ECONOMIC GROWTH THAN ON THE FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME.

5. IN STATING WHAT MAY BECOME A LEADING CAMPAIGN ARGUMENT FOR THE LIBERALS LOPEZ DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS HE SAID CAN OBSCURE THE NEED FOR SOCIAL ADVANCES. HE SAID THAT THE FAVORABLE STATISTICS THAT COLOMBIA PRESENTS TO INTERNATIONAL LENDING INSTITUTIONS SHOULD NOT ALLOW THE NATION TO OBSCURE THE EXISTENCE OF A GROWING SOCIAL

INEQUALITY IN COLOMBIA.

6. LOPEZ PRAISED THE RECORD OF PAST LIBERAL ADMINS AND PLEDGED HIMSELF AS PRES TO DECENTRALIZE POWER BOTH ADMIN AND ECONOMIC IN COLOMBIA.

7. COMMENT. THE LIBERAL RALLY WAS SIGNIFICANT AS A FIRST VENTURING FORTH AFTER FOUR NATIONAL FRONT GOVTS INTO AN ELECTORAL FREE FOR ALL. THE NATION'S RECEPTIVITY TO SUCH ACTIVITIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE VIOLENCE OF THE 1950'S AND THE APATHY OF RECENT ELECTIONS 30 PERCENT TURNOUT) IS STILL TO BE GAUGED. ALSO TO BE GAUGED IS THE COHESION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY. WHILE THE JOINT APPEARANCE OF TURBAY AND LOPEZ WAS IMPRESSIVE CARLOS LLERAS REMAINS TO BE HEARD FROM AND LIBERAL PARTY UNITY HAS IN RECENT YEARS BEEN BOTH TRANSITORY AND FRAGILE. WHITE

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